



For immediate release

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Eric Merchant, Disease Control and Prevention Division Administrator, 406-457-8914

Shelly Maag, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, 406-8947

Local Health Officials Confirm Two New Cases of COVID-19 in County

Lewis and Clark Public Health announced Thursday two new cases of COVID-19 in Lewis and Clark County. These are the first cases in the county since April 9.

Both cases are men in their 50's and are not believed to be connected. One is linked to a confirmed case in Idaho, while the other is suspected to have been in contact with a known case in another Montana county.

Each man isolated themselves at the onset of symptoms, helping prevent further spread. Both had multiple, minor symptoms. Five close contacts per case have been identified, primarily household members. LCPH issued isolation and quarantine orders to both individuals and their close contacts. Isolation refers to separating people who are sick from those who are not sick. Quarantine refers to separating people who are, or may have been, exposed to COVID-19, but are not showing signs of illness.

LCPH defines close contact as exposure of 15 minutes or more within 6 feet of the person diagnosed COVID-19 positive, less than 48 hours before symptoms began. Two weeks is considered the incubation period for the virus that causes COVID-19. That means someone who's been exposed to the virus is likely to get sick within two weeks, if at all.

"We wish these gentleman our best and hope they have quick and complete recoveries," said Drenda Niemann, health officer. "I want to emphasize these individuals did the right thing. As soon as they had symptoms, they stayed home and got tested. Our public health nurses worked quickly to do contact tracing and isolate and quarantine known contacts. These measures are taken to quickly contain the disease, protecting our community."

Niemann stresses people should continue to practice good personal hygiene and practice physical distancing to help prevent the spread of the disease, especially as the State reopens.

"We must stay vigilant, now is not the time to let our guard down," she added.

Physical distancing, good personal hygiene, and wearing of appropriate face coverings continue to be the most effective strategies for protecting against COVID-19. Also, if you feel sick, please stay home to protect others from disease.

Information about how to protect oneself from COVID-19 is available on the health department website at www.lccountymt.gov/covid-19.